

## **Executive Summary**

### **I. Introduction**

California is pleased to join in partnership with the U.S. Secretary of Education and the U.S. Department of Education (USDE) to implement the Reading First (RF) Program.

Over the past seven years, California has embarked on a comprehensive public school reform effort that is based on a simple but profound proposition: to prepare each student to meet or exceed world-class standards for academic excellence.

At the heart of this reform movement is a commitment, by both individuals and institutions, to increase academic expectations and the achievement of each student in every California public school. California's reading reform efforts, in turn, are based on high expectations for all students.

The President of the State Board of Education, in a recent video by the *Los Angeles Times*, remarked:

*"Reading is the gateway skill. Until a child learns how to read, so many other things are inaccessible to him. California has had a tremendous and positive focus on getting all kids to be able to read as soon as possible." \**

California's move to a standards-based instructional system began with the adoption of academic content standards in four core academic areas, including English-Language Arts (1997). The State next adopted a Reading/Language Arts Framework in 1999, which was followed by the historic adoption of English-Language Arts/English Language Development instructional materials in January 2002.

The State-adopted English-Language Arts content standards, the newly adopted instructional programs for reading/language arts, and new professional development programs for teachers and principals, are all centered around the scientific research on how children learn how to read. As a result, California has successfully established an instructional system to offer guidance to every teacher, for every student, on the delivery of a comprehensive, standards-based and scientific research-based instructional reading program.

The California Reading First Plan will build directly on the State's statutory construct of instructional materials and assessments, and school site administrator and teacher professional development – all of which are aligned to California's academic content standards.

*\* This commitment to K-3 reading is captured on the enclosed Reading by 9 video (see cd/dvd) and Exhibit II: California's Reading Reform Initiatives and California's Reading First Plan for LEAs.*

As a result, the Reading First Program will build upon the current scope of existing legislated programs. The programs include the recently established AB 466, Mathematics and Reading Professional Development Program for teachers, and AB 75, the Principal Training Program.

Under AB 466, the training is designed to help teachers understand the scientific research on reading and to learn how to teach the newly adopted Reading/Language Arts comprehensive instructional programs. Under AB 75, principals and vice principals will be trained to become instructional leaders, and will attain basic knowledge and information about the newly adopted instructional reading/language arts programs.

Finally, the Reading First Program will seek to address the State's greatest needs. Reading First will assist California in targeting its efforts to high-need local educational agencies (LEAs) to ensure all children in California learn to read by the end of the third grade.

## **II. State Educational Agency (State Board of Education) Approved Plan**

California is eager to implement its Reading First Plan in eligible and competitively selected LEAs, immediately upon approval of the federal grant. In its initial year, the Plan provides three opportunities for LEAs to qualify for the Reading First Program. To participate, LEAs are required to give assurances they will implement the following three major components of the SEA Plan:

- A. Full implementation of scientific, research-based instructional programs as evidenced by use of the State's adopted instructional program (s) for reading/language arts (*all programs listed below qualify to meet the criteria of scientific, research-based instructional programs for the five essential components of effective reading instruction and include proven instructional strategies*):

### Grades K-3 (Students) & K-12 (Special Education Students)

- Houghton Mifflin, California Edition, Reading: *A Legacy of Literacy 2003*
- SRA/McGraw-Hill, *SRA Open Court Reading 2000/2002*

### Grades 4-8 (for K-12 Special Education Students Only)

- Glencoe/McGraw-Hill (Sopris West), *Language!*
- Hampton Brown, *High Point*
- Scholastic, *READ 180*
- SRA/McGraw-Hill, *SRA Reach Program*
- Wright Group/McGraw-Hill, *Fast Track Reading Program*

- B. Use of appropriate valid and reliable diagnostic, screening, and classroom-based instructional assessments:

LEAs will be provided a recommended list (including both assessments recommended of the Assessment Committee of *The Secretary's Reading Partnership Academy* and assessments that are curriculum-linked) of valid and reliable screening, diagnostic, monitoring progress, and outcome tools to be used by teachers with the adopted instructional programs. These tools will be selected by the LEA; and for those selected, teachers and principals will receive training on their purpose and use during their participation in professional development programs offered both by the state and the LEA.

The State will also provide LEAs, if requested, with 6-8 week curriculum-linked assessments for the two State adopted K-3 programs.

- C. Ongoing professional development, with the first year of training in state approved professional development programs, for all teachers and site administrators involved with the students in the Reading First Program schools:

LEAs will be required to utilize state approved reading professional development training provided either by State Board approved providers *or California's Professional Development Institutes (CPDIs) for Reading* for every K-3 teacher and site administrator the first year of the program or the first year they are in a Reading First School. These approved training programs require 120 hours of training for teachers and 80 hours for site administrators for the first year of the grant. Instruction for teachers is organized by grade level and is based on the adopted reading/language arts program used by the LEA. The content covers the required curriculum of Reading First: *the Five Elements, Instructional Strategies, Types of Assessments (with emphasis on diagnostic and classroom assessments), and the Scientific Research on Reading*. During the academic year, teachers and site administrators are given a practicum as part of their hours, which includes participation in grade level meetings, additional training (provided by CPDIs and LEAs), time to analyze classroom and diagnostic assessments, and opportunities to attend other approved professional development events.

LEAs, who do not partner with the CPDIs for teacher and principal training, will utilize State Board approved providers for AB466 and AB75 respectively.

### **III. Local Education Agency (LEA) Plan**

To target grant funds on the highest need LEAs and on those with the highest quality proposals, California intends to limit eligibility to LEAs who have either one thousand of their second and third graders or fifty percent or more of their second and third graders scoring in the categories "below basic" and "far below basic" on the California Standards

Test. There are roughly 200 school districts in California serving 3.3 million students and 1.2 million K-3

students that would qualify for the Reading First Program based on the above definition of eligibility and other criteria prescribed by law. These two hundred plus LEAs are geographically diverse, urban and rural, as well as small, medium, and large. California will provide LEA Application workshops and technical assistance to ensure that a high percentage of the eligible LEAs will submit competitive applications during the course of the first year of funding.

To help LEAs focus sufficient resources on reading in the early grades, California proposes to fund a sufficient number of schools in each eligible LEA to attain a critical mass of effort. To do this, California will fund half of the Reading First eligible schools in each of the LEAs competitively chosen to participate in the Reading First Program. LEAs applying for subgrants will be required to establish that the criteria for the selection of eligible schools to be served are fully aligned with the requirements of the Act.

LEAs will sign assurance statements that they will: (1) adopt and implement one or more of the State Board's approved, scientifically research-based instructional reading/ language arts programs, (2) participate in on-going and extensive teacher and site administrator training, and (3) submit evaluating and reporting data on student achievement and program effectiveness.

#### **IV. State Organizations Serving the Reading First Program**

California's Reading First Plan will be a statewide partnership of key state organizations responsible for educational policy and the delivery of public education. The Governor, Secretary for Education, State Board of Education, Superintendent of Public Instruction, California Department of Education, and the University of California will have major roles in the implementation and oversight of the Reading First Program. The California Department of Education will have administrative responsibilities for funding and meeting reporting requirements. The University of California, through its Educational Outreach service branch, will provide support for the California Professional Development Institutes for Reading (CPDIs), which will serve to support professional development programs and technical assistance services for the LEAs.

Representatives of the California State University system and the Association of Independent California Colleges and Universities serve on the Reading and Literacy Partnership Team. They will focus on pre-service issues and will consult with the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing regarding the reading components for the institutions seeking accreditation for teacher pre-service programs.

The Reading and Literacy Partnership Team membership meets all statutory requirements. Members met three times prior to the submittal of the California Reading First Plan to provide input on the Plan. The Team plans to meet formally quarterly, or as needed. Some of the members will participate in the selection of eligible LEAs and on the advisory panel for the design and implementation of the State's Evaluation Plan and Report.

## **Section I**

### **Improving Reading Instruction**

This section reviews California's recent reading initiatives, its seven-year effort to support the scientific research findings on beginning reading, and its alignment and inclusion in the Reading First Program. It defines subgrant eligibility, criteria for awards, process for selection, and offers an update on the status of California's Reading Excellence Act schools.

#### **A. Current Reading Initiatives and Identified Gaps**

California has been engaged in a serious public school reform effort since the mid-1990s. The foundation of this reform rests on a commitment to increase academic expectations and achievement for every student. California's public demands its public schools prepare its future citizens to meet or exceed world-class standards for excellence, productivity, and civic responsibility.

Policy makers and educational leaders, at all levels, have helped to develop and implement a systematic approach to reading improvement as authorized in key legislation. [See Exhibit I: Summary of Key Legislation]

This prescribed approach includes elements that provide leadership, curriculum content components, quality instructional materials, training, and follow-up assistance necessary to help assure the State's Reading Initiatives and California's Reading First Plan, have a mutually agreed upon and like-minded vision. [See Exhibit II: California Reading Reforms and Reading First Plan]

California's two most significant accomplishments to-date are the adoption of the academic content standards for four core areas, one of which is English-Language Arts (1997); and the adoption of Reading/Language Arts instructional program materials, K-8 (2002). These two key components of California's Reading Initiatives are based upon scientific evidence on how to teach beginning reading, K-3. [See Attachment A: California K-3 English-Language Arts Standards and Attachment B: California Reading/Language Arts Adoption Criteria].

After a full reading of the Standards and Criteria for the newly adopted reading/language arts materials, it becomes very apparent California offers guidance to every teacher, for every student, with comprehensive standards-based and scientific research-based, instructional reading programs. Now that standards are embedded into the new reading/language arts materials, they will be accessible and achievable by all students, particularly by disadvantaged children. [See Exhibit III: List of the California Reading/Language Arts Adoptions –2002]

Throughout this proposal, references will be made to California's efforts in bringing to all classroom teachers access to the knowledge of the latest scientific research and how to effectively implement research-based, reading/language arts programs. As stated by the Governor's Secretary for Education, Kerry Mazzoni, *To move California to a standards-based instructional system, teachers in every classroom need to be trained on the state-adopted standards, frameworks, and instructional materials they will use to help students*

*meet these standards. Each student must be provided standards-based textbooks and other instructional materials. Without these two basic ingredients, students will be shortchanged. (Sacramento Bee, July, 2002)*

### **Identified Needs and Gaps**

To meet the goal of the California Reading First Plan that every student will be able to read proficiently by the end of grade 3, it is imperative the LEAs with schools of greatest need be supported and served with the human resources, tools, and programs the State is now able to make available to these schools. [Exhibit IV: Identified Needs & Gaps]

The Reading First Plan, in alignment with California's High Priority Schools Grant Program (AB 961), addresses those schools with the highest portions of children performing at the lowest levels of proficiency on the California Standards Test in grades 2 and 3. This test measures all standards of reading, writing strategies, and written and oral English language conventions. While California has adopted world-class standards for academic excellence in reading, California has not yet been successful in moving a majority of K-12 students to meet or exceed these high standards as indicated by the SAT9 scores in reading. The average performance on reading achievement is below California's high standards for almost every grade indicating there is a need for teachers to learn how to properly instruct these children in reading.

There is growing evidence to support the effectiveness of a comprehensive research-based instructional program in giving teachers the necessary knowledge and tools to successfully instruct underachieving children. The *Thriving Excellence* case studies presented at *The Secretary's Reading Leadership Academy*, 2002 (which includes the success of California's Ingelwood schools), and recent accomplishments in Los Angeles Unified School District are an examples of this success. [See Attachment L for scores of LAUSD's first graders after one year's use of one of California's adopted reading programs.]

With California's recent textbook adoption, teachers for grades K-3 can choose between two research-based reading/language arts programs. K-12 special education teachers are offered a choice of the same K-3 core programs as well as grade 4-8 stand-alone intervention programs designed to meet the learning needs of students who are reading two or more years below grade level. There is a desire and commitment to ensure all teachers have adequate core instructional materials.

Given classroom teachers are now responsible for scaffolding the teaching of English learners (Limited English Proficient students), learners with reading difficulties, and learners with deficits in essential basic skill components of reading, it is the State's responsibility to inform teachers of the latest research on reading in order to enhance their knowledge and skills on how to deliver reading instruction; and how to utilize support materials for struggling learners to help meet students' daily learning needs. California's English learners and special education students, for the first time this year, will have publisher-developed daily lessons which offer additional 30-45 minutes of instruction (e.g. handbook/guide for English language learners and special education students—extra lessons that preteach or reteach each

daily lesson to provide additional skill practice when needed). The Reading First Plan aims to meet the needs of struggling learners by requiring LEAs to adopt the State's approved programs and hold them responsible for fully implementing the reading program at each participating school.

This year, there is another first. California enacted a professional development program for all K-12 teachers of reading (AB 466). Based on State criteria, this program includes 40 hours of approved "training curriculum" on: (1) how to implement the new State Board adopted reading programs, (2) the scientific research which supports the instructional program, and (3) how to utilize valid and reliable student assessments. An additional 80-hour practicum includes more in-depth training on research-proven instructional strategies, the use and interpretation of various types/purposes of assessments, and engages teachers in grade level sessions so they can reflect on their teaching practices and discuss ways to better support the learning needs of their students.

The State also enacted a new site administrators' professional development program (AB 75), similar to the teachers' "training curriculum" across the K-3 grade levels, and supports and targets the roles of the principal as an instructional leader to help monitor student achievement and provide instructional support to teachers. This program for principals is required for all low-performing schools (AB 961).

California's Reading First Program Plan incorporates the needs of high priority schools and offers an approach focused on teaching and learning, because California believes that anything less would not eliminate the gap between low performing and high performing schools. The approach is a direct reflection of research verifying low student achievement can be improved through systemic high quality instruction.

## **B. Rationale for Using Scientifically Based Reading Research**

Back in March 1997, the California State Board of Education had a special workshop session on whether or not educational policy should be based on scientific research. A presentation by E.D. Hirsch, who had just published *The Schools We Need: Why We Don't Have Them*, emphasized this need. He stated in his book and to the Board, that *the most reliable type of research in education (as in medicine) tends to be 'epidemiological research, that is, studies of definitely observable effects exhibited by large populations of subjects over considerable periods of time. The sample size and the duration of such large-scale studies help to cancel out the misleading influences of uncontrolled variables. An additional degree of confidence can be placed in educational research if it is consistent with well-accepted findings in neighboring fields like psychology and sociology. Educational research that conflicts with such mainstream findings is to be greeted with special skepticism.*

The State Board acted on Hirsch's message and continues to support the scientific research behind the Reading First Initiative through its publications and policy decisions. The terms, "current and confirmed research" reflect this action and are found in California's Education Code. Most importantly, the scientific research on beginning reading was captured in the 1997 California English-Language Arts Standards, in the 1999 Reading/Language Arts Framework



for California Public Schools, in the 1999 Special Education Task Force Report, and in the 1999-2000 Reading/Language Arts/English Language Development Adoption Criteria. [See Exhibit V; California's Research-Based Documents]

### **C. Definition Subgrant LEA Eligibility**

In order to focus grant funds on the highest need LEAs with high quality proposals, California intends to limit eligibility to LEAs in California with one thousand of their second and third graders, or fifty percent or more of their second and third graders, scoring in categories "below basic" and "far below basic" on the California Standards Test.

Additionally, these LEAs, as required under federal law, must also meet one of three separate criteria to be included in the eligible list of LEAs:

- 1) The LEA has jurisdiction over an area designated as an empowerment zone or an enterprise community. OR
- 2) The LEA has a significant number or percentage of schools that are identified for school improvement under Title I, Part A. California intends to allow LEAs with two or more School Improvement schools, or 25% of its schools identified for School Improvement to be eligible for Reading First. OR
- 3) The LEA has the highest numbers or percentages of children who are counted for allocations under Title I, Part A, in comparison to other LEAs in the State. California intends to allow LEAs with 2,000 or more students, or sixty percent of students counted for allocation of Title I funds to be eligible for Reading First.

There are roughly 200 plus LEAs in California serving 3.3 million students, and 1.2 million K-3 students, that would qualify for the Reading First Program given the above definition of eligibility. [See Exhibit VI: Draft List of Eligible LEAs] These two hundred plus LEAs are geographically diverse, urban and rural, as well as small, medium, and large. California will provide application workshops and technical assistance to ensure that a high percentage of the eligible LEAs submit competitive applications.

In order to help LEAs enhance their reading instruction through Reading First subgrants as soon as possible, California intends to begin awarding subgrants as early as September 2002. Additional subgrants will be awarded in December 2002 and April 2003. If there are still funds available after the last round of subgrants are awarded, previously approved LEAs will be allowed to apply for additional funding to increase their number of schools participating in the Reading First Program.

### **D. Criteria for Awarding Subgrants**

In order to meet all the criteria under Section D of the "Reading First Criteria for Review of State Applications," the California Reading First Plan includes a three-part LEA Subgrant

Application. The first part (Sections 1-4) of the LEA Subgrant Application confirms the LEAs eligibility. The second part requires the LEA to agree to a list of assurances that when the LEA implements its Reading First Program, it will ensure that its participating schools utilize California's scientifically research based reading program of adopted instructional materials, and pre-approved professional development curriculum to support the instructional materials and promote instructional leadership. [See Exhibit VII: Assurance Statements of LEA and School Site(s) for Reading First Subgrant]

The third and final part of the LEA Subgrant Application is a set of Competitive Questions which seeks to determine which applicants are ready and committed to achieving the purpose of Reading First to ensure that all children learn to read well by the end of third grade. Successful LEAs will have had to assemble a knowledgeable Reading First Leadership Team within the LEA to properly respond to the Competitive Questions and will need to have an understanding of the work to be shared at the LEA and the school sites levels. [See Attachment D: Draft LEA Subgrant Application, page 10.]

A description of how the three-part LEA Subgrant Application meets each of the Reading First Selection Criteria for Awarding Subgrants follows.

**Criterion i: Schools to be Served**

In order to help LEAs focus sufficient resources on reading in the early grades and attain a critical mass of effort, California proposes to fund half of the Reading First eligible schools in each of the LEAs competitively chosen to participate in the Reading First Program. LEAs applying for subgrants will select the schools to participate based on criteria for the schools to be served that are fully aligned with the requirements of the Act. Reading First legislation requires that funding go only to schools that are both—

*“(A) Among the schools served by that eligible local educational agency with the highest percentages or numbers of students in kindergarten through grade 3 reading below grade level, based on the most currently available data; and*

*(B)(i) Identified for school improvement under section 1116(b); or  
(ii) have the highest percentages or numbers of children counted under section 1124(c).”*

Applicant LEAs will be asked to describe the manner in which schools were selected; for example, what information was provided to potential schools; were schools asked to commit to the program in order to be selected, and were teachers and principals involved in the decision.

Review criteria for judging LEA subgrant applications with regard to selection of schools will include:

- a) compliance with the school eligibility requirements;
- b) the quality of the process for educating school personnel about the Reading First program;

- c) indication of the commitment of teachers and site administrator to this program at the selected schools.

**Criterion ii: Instructional Assessments**

This criterion requires that LEAs use reading assessments for four purposes: screening, diagnosis, progressing monitoring, and outcome. Based on selected assessments, the LEA will be able to establish clear goals and year- to-year progress benchmarks. The *Reading/Language Arts Framework for California Public Schools* also addresses these four purposes and when to use these assessments for measuring student progress. The LEAs will be guided to conduct assessments for all of the key technical skills of reading as specified in the *Framework*. [See Exhibit XXIII: *Framework: Assessment Schedule for Grades K-3 – Assessment of Proficiency in the Language Arts*]

The list of assessment tools from which participating LEAs may choose is provided in *Exhibit XXIV: Recommended List of Assessments for California's Reading First LEAs*. LEAs will be required to use one or more of these assessments by category and grade level as identified. To ensure that the instructional assessment instruments have been rigorously evaluated and are confirmed to be reliable and valid, the assessments in Exhibit XXIV were selected from a list recommended by the Assessment Committee of the Secretary's Reading Partnership Academy. The LEAs will be encouraged to use the information from these assessments to help verify that all of the essential components of reading have been learned. If the essential components have not been learned, LEAs will be encouraged to reassess the need for program modifications.

In addition to the above recommended assessment tools, all the adopted instructional programs have extensive assessment materials and include ways to assess oral fluency, phonemic awareness, decoding, spelling, vocabulary, and reading comprehension that are tied to what the students are learning. California's professional development program, under AB 466, requires teachers to be familiarized with various types of assessments for purposes of screening, diagnosing, and monitoring student achievement in reading. The State will provide curriculum-embedded assessments and end-of-year assessments associated with the two adopted reading/language arts instructional programs. [See Exhibit XXI: Summary of Evaluation Responsibilities]

California's Reading First LEAs and their participating schools will be required to give the following assurances that the recommended assessments will be utilized:

At the LEA Level

*Develop and implement an assessment plan for all Reading First schools based on valid and reliable instructional assessments from the recommended list.*

At the LEA's School Level

*Guide instruction by monitoring student progress based on the selected assessments approved by the district; and use results to make program decisions for the purpose of maximizing student achievement.*

**Criterion iii: Instructional Strategies and Programs**

The State adopted two comprehensive K-3 reading/language arts programs: SRA *Open Court Reading 2000/2002* and Houghton-Mifflin's California Edition, *Reading: A Legacy of Literacy 2003*. These two programs systematically and explicitly address all of Reading First's five essential components of reading, including using explicit and systematic instructional strategies.

The two adopted programs meet the State's adoption requirements for addressing key scientifically research-based instructional strategies, and Reading First's requirements for pacing, accelerating, and/or extending the learning opportunities to meet the proficiency needs of students. [See Attachment B: *2002 K-8 Reading/Language Arts/English Language Development Adoption Criteria* ] A few examples are given below:

- ✓ Specific types of research-based strategies of teaching include teacher instructions for direct teaching and demonstration, transitioning for direct teaching and demonstration (scaffolding), guided and independent (*Criteria*, lines 232-237).
- ✓ Materials and assessments, including cumulative and/or spiraled review of skills to enable students to reach a high level of reading proficiency (*Criteria*, line 221).
- ✓ Extra practice materials, for students who need it, are provided (*Criteria*, line 240).
- ✓ Instructional materials are standards-based and include acceleration or enrichment materials, various assignments, and/or suggestions for advanced learners (*Criteria*, lines 241-242).
- ✓ ELD support materials and Special Education support materials, already present in both of the State adopted programs that are directly tied to the core program. These materials provide an additional 30-45 minutes of daily instruction, including pre-teaching and re-teaching practice to assist students in mastering the core program, including the *California's English-Language Arts Content Standards* (*Criteria*, lines 200-202).

Critical to the success of California's Reading First Program is the State's intent to select only LEAs that have purchased and begun to use one of the State adopted programs (beginning in the academic year of 2002-03). Because both adopted programs are scientifically research-based and comprehensive, there should be no layering of a non-research based program on top of the State adopted program. It is required that the participating LEA and its schools certify that they:

LEA Level

*Agree to use and support only supplemental materials, technology programs, or staff development programs that support the scientific research-based adopted reading/language arts instructional program.*

LEA School Level

Ensure that any supplemental materials, technology programs, or staff *development programs* be in alignment with the scientific research-based adopted reading/language arts instructional program.

As a result under the California Reading First Plan, each competitively selected LEA will be able to select and implement:

- ♦ one common reading/language arts program for all grade levels, K-3
- ♦ one comprehensive, on-going professional development program
- ♦ one approved, on-site technical assistance team
- ♦ one common selection of student assessments for purposes of screening, diagnosis, monitoring progress, and measuring outcomes (with differences possibly by grade level)

Most LEA and school level decisions related to supporting student learning needs will be answered within the context of these common dimensions. An annual internal evaluation will offer evidence on student progress. The effectiveness of the delivery of instruction will, as a result, be focused, informative, and generalizable. The LEA's internal evaluation of program effectiveness and student achievement should offer data that are interpretable and useful for making important decisions that will affect student learning over the duration of the Reading First Program.

**Criterion iv: Instructional Materials**

The selection of the core instructional reading/language arts program by the State for grades K-3 was made and announced to LEAs in January 2002. The LEA can choose between one of two State adopted programs.

For grades K-3, the State adopted *Criteria* to ensure that the two programs will provide, virtually to every student, a comprehensive reading/language arts program in the regular classroom; and be taught by teachers who have necessary materials to meet the needs of all students. Given California's student populations, the programs include:

- (1) all English/Language Arts Content Standards (i.e., the development of skills and knowledge within each strand of the standards)
- (2) universal access for English learners, students with reading difficulties, and special education students, with each population receiving a 30-45 minute daily lesson in addition to and connected with the basic instruction (if needed)
- (3) universal access for advanced/accelerated learners with additional enrichment materials, special assignments, and guidance for teachers working with these students
- (4) the provision that teachers have instructional materials to meet the minimum hours of instruction per day [ kindergarten (1 hour) and grades 1-3 (2.5 hours)]

California does not offer separate “intervention” programs for students in grades K-3. This is done purposefully, since the adopted *Criteria* state that *instructional materials must be constructed to meet the needs of those who enter school above, at, or one or more grade levels below the content standards, and therefore are adaptable to each student’s point of entry* [lines 278-280]. In addition, the *Criteria* state that *there must be sufficient instructional materials for increased instructional time . . .to reinforce, and extend the regular classroom instruction* [lines 355, 360-375]. The 30-45 minutes additional daily lessons (which match the instruction of the day) serve as the “intervention” part of the State’s adopted programs.

California’s Reading First Program requires the competitively selected LEAs’ participating schools to use the complete set of adopted reading/language program materials for all pupils enrolled in K-3 classrooms. These materials are extensive and provide the classroom teacher with ample instructional/learning resources (e.g., workbooks, technology-based materials, additional sets of decodable books, and classroom library collections). LEAs will be encouraged to acquire other supplemental materials, including books for classroom and school library use, that are aligned to the reading/language arts program to extend the number of daily minutes students spend on reading independently.

**NOTE:**

The California Reading First Plan includes the delivery of professional development not only for K-3 teachers and principals, but also for K-12 special education teachers. As outlined in Criterion vi, the State’s professional development program is based on helping teachers learn the content of a State adopted reading/language arts program. For its special education reading teachers for grade levels above grade 3, the LEA will be able to select one of five State adopted reading/language arts programs. However, no California Reading First funds will be authorized to purchase these programs. The programs provide these features:

- √ intensive, accelerated, comprehensive intervention for students who are significantly below grade level in reading instruction, designed to move them as quickly as possible to grade level achievement in reading [Criteria, lines 390-392]
- √ explicit and systematic instruction in phonemic awareness, word attack skills, including decoding, phonics, comprehension, vocabulary development, and additional practice materials [Criteria, lines 393-395].

**Criterion v: Instructional Leadership**

California’s Reading First Program will both (1) support teachers to immediately improve reading instruction and (2) build capacity at the LEA and school site level to sustain improvements in reading instruction and achievement past the subgrant period. To accomplish this, the LEA must focus on improving reading by (1) giving site administrators the tools and content expertise to be instructional leaders in reading, and (2) making it clear that the administrators are responsible for ensuring that all students can read well by the end of the third grade. The instructional leadership of both the LEA and site administrator will complement and support the required professional development of teachers throughout the school year via the 80-hour on-site practicum. In order to receive funding, LEAs will have to designate and explain how specific LEA staff and site administrators will work together to

provide the necessary instructional leadership through a combination of time commitment, training, and the use of Reading Coaches and Content Experts, where needed.

Below is a more detailed discussion of what successful LEAs will be doing at the LEA and school site level as part of their Reading First program to ensure instructional leadership.

#### LEA Level

The successful LEA will be required to designate the individuals who will have sufficient time and expertise to lead the district's Reading First Program schools. Through the competitive application process, each LEA will have had to establish its Reading First Leadership Team by assigning key district level personnel to its Team, consisting possibly of a school board liaison, curriculum and instruction administrator, Title I administrator, special education administrator, language acquisition administrator, library/media administrator, site council parent liaison, K-3 teacher liaison, Reading First coordinator, reading coach liaison, if appropriate. [See Attachment D: *Draft LEA Application*, Item 3, page 3] In addition, the LEA will be required to indicate that the Team assisted in the development of the LEA's Plan and will be assigned the advisory responsibility for its implementation and internal evaluation. Furthermore, the superintendent will be required to certify, as the district's top administrative leader and the spokesperson of the Board of Education, that its LEA will work in full partnership with its eligible schools. [See Attachment D: *Draft LEA RFP*, (Application Item 6A. and 6B.), pages 5-6)]

#### Required

*Assure that C&I administrators and Title I administrators reinforce established district policy guiding the consistent implementation of the adopted instructional reading program, including instructional time, use of scientifically research-based instructional strategies, and use of selected assessments.*

*Assure that the LEA's Reading First Program is coordinated with all other district and site level Language Acquisition, Title I, School Improvement, and Special Education Programs.*

#### Optional

*Assign an appropriate administrative credentialed staff member (with school administration experience and reading/language arts knowledge) to serve as the Coach Coordinator (. . .if the plan includes coaches . . .)*

The key names and roles of LEA personnel assigned to take responsibility for the full implementation of the its Reading First Plan are to be named in the RFP. [See Attachment D: *Draft LEA RFP*, (Application Item 7.3), page 9)] The LEA staff will be important to the planning and implementation of the professional development programs and the attendance of top-level LEA administrators will be highly encouraged. All personnel assigned with assuring full implementation of its Plan and support of teachers will be intricately involved in the process. The provider of the professional development and staff of the Technical Assistance Center assigned will ensure support of the teachers through the ongoing professional development practicum and encouraging the inclusion of all LEA personnel in the professional development institutes.

### School Level

Recent research studies have provided consistent evidence that strong school leadership must be rooted in the principal's decisions and actions to implement fully the selected instructional program and provide a coherent support framework to ensure a singular focus on student achievement. Such leadership also needs a strong follower-ship with knowledgeable teachers sharing in the ownership of the instructional programs and focusing on the outcomes of their students.

Therefore, the school site principal will have multiple and interconnected roles.

First, and foremost, is the role of instructional leader. The principal is held responsible for establishing the vision for student achievement, fostering commitment, providing guidance and support to teachers and staff, and ensuring the full implementation of the adopted reading/language arts program. The principal is accountable for the collection, tracking, use of student achievement data, and the results of all teachers and staff. It is also the principal's responsibility to provide feedback to teachers and staff on the instructional delivery and to encourage continuous improvement in instruction, as necessary, until all students meet or exceed grade level expectations.

Principals will receive ongoing support in the above effort through the professional development opportunities that will be part of Reading First program. Similar to the teachers' training, the focus is on the selected reading/language arts program, the proper use and interpretation of student assessments, the scientific research on beginning reading, the *California English/Language Arts Content Standards, Reading/Language Arts*, and on the *Reading/Language Arts Framework for California Public Schools*. The new Principal Training Program (AB 75) aims to prepare elementary school site administrators to lead the school's effort to significantly improve student achievement through successful implementation of the State's adopted reading/language arts programs (also mathematics programs). *Module 1* of the training, 40 hours during an institute and 40 hours for an on-site practicum, will prepare the principal to:

- understand the rationale and research supporting a consistently-implemented scientific, research-based reading/language arts program across all classrooms
- demonstrate an understanding of the structure, organization, and content of the selected State adopted instructional program
- develop an understanding of the key scientific, research-based instructional strategies and techniques required and used in the instructional program
- acquire strategies to effectively supervise and achieve full implementation of the instructional program and assure reading instructional time is protected
- learn strategies to establish and maintain a school-wide focus on the improvement of student achievement
- understand the assessment system and how to use it to improve instruction: assessment tools, assessment schedules, classroom assessment reports and analyses, grade level summary reports, and charting of data focused on improving instruction



- develop strategies to:
  - (1) organize and supervise school-wide efforts through the effective use of the literacy coach (if available),
  - (2) provide focused and collegial grade level team meetings, and
  - (3) coordinate classroom instruction with supplementary, research-based support programs (e.g., at-the-elbow coaching, after-school-coordinated reading program, and the allocation of resources to meet the needs of these programs).

As stated in the certified assurance by each of the LEA's the selected schools' principals will agree to: [See Attachment D: *Draft LEA Application*, Item 6C, page 6)]

*Attend either the CPDI Reading institutes for principals or AB 75 Principal Training Program for Module 1, based on the district's State adopted reading/language arts program.*

#### **Criterion vi: LEA and School Based Professional Development**

The first year of the program, or the first year that a teacher is employed at a Reading First School, professional development in reading instruction will be purchased from the California Professional Development Institutes or State Board of Education approved AB 466 professional development programs. The curriculum and materials for these training programs must be pre-approved by the State Board of Education. LEAs may be AB 466 professional development providers for themselves and/or other LEAs, but their curriculum and materials must first be approved by the State against the AB 466 Criteria found in Attachment E. LEAs will be required to include in their Reading First Plan a provision for "ongoing professional development that builds upon the skills teachers and administrators have gained in the first year and is aligned with the curricula," preferably with the provider of the initial training.

In Year 1, the instructors for the State's professional development programs (through either CPDI AB 466 and AB 75 or a State approved provider and training curriculum) already have had extensive training to deliver these programs. All selected instructors will be highly knowledgeable about the scientifically-based reading research. Most will have had experience in teaching the instructional program. By Year 2 and 3, the LEAs will be able to do their own program or choose to receive their training from the State approved list of providers and training curriculum or CPDI (the latter will have advanced and mastery training curriculum available to interested LEAs). In Year 2, knowledgeable teachers and staff developers could be trained to participate as instructors. By Year 3, the LEA will have many experienced and knowledgeable teachers in their own district. Therefore, the LEA will be able to utilize their own key teachers and staff developers, if they choose. This option is more likely to occur in LEAs that provide reading coaches and have content experts during Years 1 and 2.

The State Technical Assistance Centers will assist the LEA to ensure the focus, content, and schedule are in alignment with Reading First goals and objectives. The LEA will also receive training materials from the Technical Assistance Center focused on critical-need areas identified by the LEA's schools (e.g., the use, purpose, and scheduling of screening, diagnostic, and classroom-based instructional assessments; follow-up trainings on the State

adopted reading/language arts programs and their embedded, research-based instructional strategies; and special services for LEA staff development providers or school-level reading coaches).

The criteria for evaluating the LEA 3-Year Professional Development Plan will include attention primarily to the content of the program. Some required content pieces would need to include (1) focus on the State adopted reading/language arts program (i.e., all of the essential components of reading instruction), (2) additional practice on the research-based instructional strategies, (3) selection, use, and interpretation of the valid and reliable instructional assessment tools, (4) study of the scientific research on reading, (5) analysis of previous year's student achievement scores on reading, and (6) follow-up activities during the academic year (e.g., grade level meetings, monitoring progress of student achievement and instructional effective, etc.).

#### **Criterion vii: LEA Based Technical Assistance**

California's plan is to provide the structure of newly adopted instructional materials and approved professional development programs for teachers and site administrators, augmented by technical assistance provided through the Reading Development Center and seven Reading Implementation Centers. Therefore, per the *Criteria for Review of State Applications*, all Reading First LEAs will be expected to "coordinate with the SEA or other outside experts to provide this assistance."

Seven Reading Implementation Centers, also referred to as State Technical Assistance Centers, are located strategically in county offices of education across California. Each center will specialize in assisting certain types of LEAs; (1) urban, (2) rural, and (3) medium and small. As stated in Section II, State Leadership and Management, the goal for all technical assistance will be to assist the LEA build capacity to sustain Reading First efforts every day, for every grade, every year.

The LEA staff, in conjunction with the State Technical Assistance Center specialists, will meet on a regular basis in Year 1. They will help plan and make decisions that seek to build capacity of the principals and school teams to work together on common needs that focus on student reading achievement. For example, the State Technical Assistance Centers could assist the LEA in identifying ways to:

- focus on teaching the research-based reading/language arts program
- provide additional assistance for teachers (e.g., provide content experts to demonstrate lessons or provide additional training)
- generate a computer-based reporting system to facilitate the entry of classroom data (of the curriculum-embedded assessments by teacher) which displays the information in a way that is easily interpreted and clarifies patterns in student learning needs
- examine ways to counter barriers for teachers who are not adequately implementing the reading/language arts program or students who are not succeeding with the instruction.

The Assurances that the LEA agrees to are an outline of what work the LEA will be held accountable to complete. Where they do not currently have the capacity to complete that work, a Reading Implementation Center will assist them in attaining the capacity either directly or by directing them to professional development and other resources that will assist them.

The LEA Subgrant application requires the LEA to identify the internal resources to support its district and school level program goals. It also requires the LEA to identify needs for external assistance. This analysis will allow the LEA to make the most productive use of the State Technical Assistance Centers.

**Criterion viii: Evaluation Strategies**

The competing LEAs will be required to offer a 3-Year Internal Evaluation Plan to monitor and document the impact of Reading First activities on the reading achievement of K-3 students by school. [See Attachment D: *Draft LEA Subgrant Application*, (Question 7.6), page 9]:

*Explain how the LEA's 3-Year Internal Evaluation Plan will address school level effectiveness in fully implementing the adopted reading/language arts program and improving student reading achievement. Include what and how outcome assessment measures will be used; how data will be collected, and how program improvement decisions will be made based on analyses of the data provided by these measures (with disaggregation of data by low income, major racial/ethnic groups, English learners, and special education).*

LEA's will use their selected assessments (see criterion ii above) and those listed on Exhibit XXI, as well as the State administered California Standards Test and California Achievement Test to monitor the progress of their students and the effectiveness of their Reading First program. Successful LEAs will include in their plan a process for monitoring implementation and student progress that will allow them to help schools make program adjustments if necessary to stay on course (see Attachment D: LEA Subgrant Application, page 9).

Some of the measures the LEAs will choose from include [See Exhibit XXI: Available LEA Internal Evaluation Tools]:

- the scores on end-of-year curriculum-embedded assessments (e.g. State provided unit 5 or 6 skill assessments for grades 1, 2, and 3)
- outcome assessments (e.g. State provided end-of-year assessments for grades K, 1, 2, and 3)
- other important assessments appropriate for each grade level (e.g. publisher provided phonemic awareness for end of grade K, State or publisher provided timed oral fluency for end of grades 1, 2 and 3, and State or publisher provided vocabulary and reading comprehension assessments for end of grades 1, 2, and 3)

Reading First LEAs and participating schools will be responsible for monitoring program implementation and utilizing assessments to assist student learning. LEA's and participating schools will also be responsible for utilizing this information to modify program activities to

maximize program effectiveness. Finally, the LEAs will be responsible for feeding the information gathered on program implementation and student assessments into the State level evaluation of the Reading First Program.

The State level Reading and Literacy Partnership Team will develop, and recommend to the State Board of Education, a definition of “significant progress” for schools and LEAs in Reading First. The State Board of Education approved definition and process will be used to determine if a school or LEA should be discontinued in the Reading First Program.

The Internal Evaluation Plan will be evaluated on the basis of proposed data collection procedures, the selection of valid and reliable measures, the process used to review the evaluation findings, and the criteria or decision points that influence what and how program improvements are made.

**Criterion ix: Access to Print Materials**

Since 1998, California has provided special funding for the purpose of improving school libraries (AB 862). It is expected that the LEA’s application will address how it plans to promote reading and library programs that provide student access to engaging reading materials. [See Attachment D: *Draft LEA Subgrant Application*, (Question 7.7), page 9]

*Describe LEA’s plans to promote reading and library programs that provide students in Reading First schools access to a wide range of reading materials.*

Also, in order to protect language arts instructional time, California’s 2002 K-8 Reading/Language Arts/English Language Development Adoption Criteria [Attachment B, page 6, line 203-206] require that “those K-3 content standards in history-social science and science that lend themselves to instruction during the language arts time period are addressed within the language arts materials, particularly in the selection of expository texts that are read to students or that students read.” As a result, the adopted reading instructional materials already include diverse reading matter, such as poetry and expository, and cover a wide range of subjects, such as science and history. Additionally, the adopted materials include a qualified collection of books that may be purchased for the classroom or the school library that support and expand the reading program.

LEAs and schools also have access to the *California Reading List* of reviewed books that are categorized by degree of difficulty. LEAs and schools utilize this list when making purchases for classroom and library collections, as well as recommending reading material to students and parents.

**Criterion xi: Competitive Priorities**

As indicated by the *Draft Scoring Rubric for LEA Applicants* at the end of the *Draft LEA Application, Requirements, and Scoring Rubric* [Please see Attachment D.], points will be awarded for responses to the Competitive Questions in the Application. To ensure that every funded application is sufficient to be successful under the Reading First Program, only applications that include all the required assurances and meet a minimum score on the Competitive Questions will be considered for funding.

Additional points will be awarded to passing applications if at least 15% of the students served in the LEA or at least 6,500 students in the LEA are from families with incomes below the poverty line. Additional points will also be given to applications in which the LEA commits to the use of Reading Coaches to assist the LEA and the participating schools. These priority points will not help a poor application pass, but they will allow a sufficient application that serves many students from low income families and/or has made the commitment to utilize Reading Coaches, to be funded before a sufficient application that does not have these characteristics.

## **E. Process for Awarding Subgrants**

### Notification

LEAs that meet the eligibility requirements of California's Reading First Program as articulated above in *C. Definition of Subgrant LEA Eligibility* will be notified by the California Department of Education and provided with the application and information necessary to successfully compete for Reading First funding. Pre-application workshops and meetings for eligible LEAs will be conducted by CDE and the Technical Assistance Centers to assist LEAs in developing and writing their applications. [See Exhibit XIX: Work Plan and Implementation Schedule.]

### Selection Process

As explained in *D. Criteria for Awarding Subgrants* above, in order to be funded, an eligible LEA will have to receive a passing score on the Competitive Questions [Attachment D: LEA Application]. The Competitive Questions in the LEA Subgrant application offer the means for judging the LEA's understanding of the general criteria for the Reading First Program; its focus on reading success; its proposed use and coordination of funds; its evaluation plan; its leadership; and its overall readiness and commitment to the program. Responses to the Competitive Questions will determine if the LEA Reading First Plan is sufficient to be successful (meets the minimum to pass) and differentiate quality of the submitted plans to ensure that the highest quality plans are funded.

Only applications receiving a passing score will receive priority points for low-income students and the use of reading coaches, where applicable. This will ensure that an application doesn't pass only because it qualifies for priority points and does not meet the minimum qualifications for success. After the awarding of priority points the applications will be ranked according to score and will be funded from high to low until no funds remain. This process will ensure that the highest quality Reading First Subgrant plans with the necessary elements for success are funded.

### Reviewers of LEA Applications

Members of the California Reading and Literacy Partnership Team will serve on the State's LEA subgrant application review committee. In an effort to begin immediate implementation of California's Reading First Plan, a timeline has been established which permits LEAs, who are at various stages of preparation for participating in the program, to enter throughout the year. Round 1 begins with Reading First applications due the first of September 2002. With

appropriate approvals, funding could become available by the first of October 2002. [See Exhibit VIII: LEA Selection Timeline, 2002-03 Tentative Calendar]

#### Size and Number of Subgrants

While LEAs will provide a budget proposal as part of the application, funding for each subgrant will be based on \$8,000 per Reading First teacher in the LEA. Preliminary calculations indicate that this level of funding will exceed the statutorily required minimum level based on the percentage of Title I funds the LEA receives of all the Title I funds in the State. California will verify before each subgrant is awarded that the amount of the subgrant meets or exceeds the required minimum subgrant amount.

The \$8,000 per Reading First Teacher amount will also provide a subgrant of sufficient size and scope to allow the Reading First LEAs and participating schools to successfully implement all activities. The \$8,000 per teacher will support the following:

\$2,500 for professional development costs (\$1,000 stipend and \$1,500 training costs)  
\$2,000 for purchase of assessment materials: screening, diagnostic, and progress monitoring  
\$3,500 for other options, such as, additional reading materials for classroom and library, consumable core materials and/or costs associated with teachers assigned as reading coaches or content experts.

Initial calculations indicate that this level of subgrant award would allow approximately two-thirds to three-quarters of the over two hundred LEAs eligible for Reading First in California to be funded in 2002-2003. Distribution of funding will be determined competitively.

### **F. Integration of Proposed Reading First Activities With REA Activities**

One hundred twenty-eight schools in fifty-two school districts are in their first year of the Reading Excellence Act (REA) subgrant implementation in California. REA subgrants were awarded in June 2001. First year evaluation data will be available in September 2002. Because Reading Excellence Act schools have not yet completed one academic year of implementation, the REA activities have not yet undergone a rigorous analysis, nor have outcomes been identified. Therefore, findings from the first year evaluation of REA subgrants are not available to influence the 2002-03 Reading First Plan Application.

California's Reading First program will differ from the Reading Excellence Act program in that Reading First will build directly on the State's statutory construct of instructional materials, principal and teacher professional development, and assessment all aligned to the academic content standards (English/Language Arts). The Reading First Program will also focus on building capacity and critical mass in each funded school district by requiring the district to be involved in various aspects of the program and by funding a sufficient number of schools in the district to participate in the program.

As the Reading First Program is implemented, school districts with REA subgrants, that are not eligible for Reading First subgrants, will continue to their completion in order to allow

REA schools to finish their programs and determine if there are any REA effective practices that could be integrated into the Reading First program.

Since over half of the school districts with REA subgrants will also be eligible for Reading First subgrants, school districts will be allowed to choose whether to (1) complete their REA subgrants at funded schools and begin the Reading First program at other schools in the district, or (2) modify the REA subgrant program to be aligned with the Reading First program and use both funding sources to enhance the school's reading efforts. [See Exhibit X: Reading Excellence Participation Options]

## **Section II**

### **State Leadership and Management**

This section begins with a description of the state professional development plan that will provide direct training to LEAs and is followed by the state technical assistance plan. The concluding part includes a general overview of the agencies, roles and responsibilities, key personnel, and the delivery system that is ready to fully implement the California Reading First Plan.

#### **A. Professional Development Plan**

California has several options for LEAs in terms of participation in the State approved professional development programs. Under AB 466 (2001), the State Board has approved the criteria to help teachers: (1) understand the scientific research on reading, (2) learn how to teach the newly adopted reading/language arts comprehensive instructional programs, and (3) become familiarized with various types of assessments (screening, diagnostic, and classroom-based). [See Attachment E: State Professional Development Plan and AB 466 Criteria]

Under AB 75 (2001), the State has approved the criteria for preparing site administrators to become instructional leaders, which includes: (1) basic knowledge and information about the newly adopted instructional reading/language arts programs, (2) the types of assessments, (3) how to monitor instructional delivery and student progress, and (4) how to support teachers with students who need additional support in learning how to read. [See Attachment F: AB 75 Criteria]

The Reading First LEAs and participating schools will use Reading First subgrant funds to purchase teacher and principal training from the a State approved provider of their choice (which may be the LEA itself) or a California's Professional Development Institutes (CPDI). CPDIs are housed in seven county offices of education: three in the south, two in the central valley, one in the Bay Area, and one in the north. [Refer to Attachment E: State Professional Development Plan & AB 466 Criteria]

Non-Reading First LEAs and their schools will also benefit from this State structure of approved professional development programs. Using either local or State funds, non-Reading First LEAs can access training that supports the State adopted reading instruction program that they are implementing.

Syllabi for the K-3, five-day, 40-hour teacher institutes are provided for three levels of instruction [See Exhibit XI: Implementation Cycle; Attachment G: Syllabi]. The bulk of the instructor and participant materials are available for review upon request.

#### **B. Technical Assistance Plan**

California's Technical Assistance Plan requires the State to be the primary provider for technical assistance to LEAs for the first three years. The Reading First Program goal to have all students reading on grade level, or above, by the end of third grade is a noble and



reachable outcome. However, it will take an enormous amount of perseverance and focused work by all LEA staff participating in this effort. Few LEAs will have the infrastructure to support the professional development and meet the requirements of the Reading First Program. Consequently, there will be LEA program assistance provided by California Professional Development Institutes (CPDI) and its Reading Development Center (RDC) and the Reading Implementation Centers (RICs).

California Professional Development Institutes (Administration Office)

The CPDI will administer the coordination of technical assistance to the LEAs, to assure:

- There are sufficient services to meet the needs of all LEAs (e.g., consultations on requirements for the LEA Plan, procedures for completing the LEA RFP, interpretation of the “Assurance Statements,” and identification of professional development opportunities).
- There is quality control on the development of services and products to assist LEAs (e.g., Q & A pamphlets, special meetings, workshops, and site visits).

Reading Development Center (RDC)

The RDC will be responsible for working with the California Department of Education to develop workshop materials for:

July-August	Application Workshops <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• LEA Implementation Plan</li><li>• LEA Internal Evaluation Requirements</li><li>• Fiscal Requirements</li></ul>
September-April	Selection Committee Reviews <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Rubric for Selection</li><li>• Statutory Requirements</li></ul>
On-going	Question & Answer Documents Special Workshop Materials <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Screening Tools for Special Education Placement</li><li>• Diagnostic Assessments for K-3 Students</li></ul> Special Topics Documents <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• LEA Internal Evaluation Report Handbook</li><li>• Job Description for Reading Coaches &amp; Coach Coordinators <i>if LEAs include coaches in their Plan</i></li></ul>

Reading Implementation Centers (RICs)

RICs work with the RDC and jointly serve LEAs in carrying out the LEA Plan. The RICs will serve the LEAs as the State’s Technical Assistance provider. The goal for all technical assistance will be to assist the LEA to build capacity to sustain Reading First efforts every day, for every grade, every year.

As discussed earlier, State Technical Assistance Center specialists will be available to meet on a regular basis with Reading First LEAs and participating schools. They will help plan and make decisions that seek to build the capacity of the principals and school teams to work together on common needs that focus on student reading achievement. For example, the State Technical Assistance Centers could assist the LEA in identifying ways to:

- focus on teaching the research-based reading/language arts program
- provide additional assistance for teachers (e.g., provide content experts to demonstrate lessons or provide additional training)
- generate a computer-based reporting system to facilitate the entry of classroom data (of the curriculum-embedded assessments by teacher) which displays the information in a way that is easily interpreted and clarifies patterns in student learning needs
- examine ways to counter barriers for teachers who are not adequately implementing the reading/language arts program or students who are not succeeding with the instruction.

### **C. California Infrastructure**

The Governor, through his Secretary for Education and in consultation with the State Superintendent of Public Instruction has established a Reading and Literacy Partnership Team. The mission of the Team is to advise and assist the development and implementation of California's Reading First Plan to accomplish the Reading First Program's goal of having every child reading at or above grade level by the end of Grade 3.

Reading and Literacy Partnership Team member selections by the Governor and the State Superintendent of Public Instruction were based on overall knowledge of California's standards-based education system and effectiveness of scientific, research-based instruction for K-3 students. [See Exhibit XII: California's Reading and Literacy Partnership Team, 2002-03] A delegation of some of the Team members attended *The Secretary's Reading Leadership Academy* in Washington, D.C. on February 20-22, 2002. The Reading and Literacy Partnership Team met three times prior to the submission of the California Plan (March 22, May 13, and May 22).

The Reading and Literacy Partnership Team plans to meet quarterly, or as needed, to advise the State on the State Evaluation Report. Representatives of the Team will sit on the Evaluation Advisory Panel which will be responsible for (1) recommending to the State Board of Education the best qualified candidate(s) to serve as contracted evaluators (evaluators must have experience in conducting scientifically based reading research), (2) advising on the development of outcome indicators in addition to the State's testing program (STAR), (3) advising the Department of Education's reporting of data (implementation evidence, achievement gains, program effectiveness, and design), and (4) advising on the definition of what constitutes a "significantly increased number of students reading at or above grade level," that schools in the Reading First Program will be required to achieve by the end of the third year. Reading and Literacy Partnership Team members will also participate in judging LEA applications for Reading First Subgrants.

The roles and responsibilities of key agencies are established to guarantee adequate support in implementing the California Reading First Plan. [See Exhibit XIII: Agency Responsibilities] Key personnel in each of these agencies are known. [See Exhibit XIV: Key Personnel] Due to the close link of California's Reading First Plan and the California Reading Initiative, there are many other players in non-RF LEAs who will also contribute to this important statewide effort [e.g., California County Superintendents Educational Services Association (Curriculum and Instruction Steering Committee)].

### **D. State Management Plan**

The California Management Plan is focused on experienced players in the California Reading Initiative efforts that began in 1995. The overarching organization chart presents the key leaders of education policy: the Governor, Legislature, Secretary for Education, State Board of Education, and Superintendent of Public Instruction. (See Exhibit XV: Reading First Organizational Chart). Key support agencies are also identified: institutions of higher education (University of California and California State University), California's Commission on Teacher Credentialing, and California's Department of Education.

In terms of the role of the State Educational Agency, which for this effort is the State Board of Education, the leadership and coordination of California's Reading First Program will include a Board-contracted evaluator and California's CPDIs with its Reading Development Center (RDC) and Reading Implementation Centers (RICs). [See Exhibit XVI: SEA Leadership and Coordination.]

Most importantly, a workable delivery system is available to support both the LEA and School Site K-3 Leadership and Structure. [See Exhibit XVII: Service Delivery System.] It is important to acknowledge that California's Governor requested that the work of the California Reading First Plan build upon the current scope of existing legislated programs to keep the focus on the systematic delivery of the State's reading efforts. This Plan is in full compliance with the Governor's purpose. Professional development services from State approved providers under AB 466 and AB 75 will be utilized, and technical assistance will be provided by state agencies along with the seven county offices of education partnerships through CPDI. [See Exhibit XVIII: Professional Development and Technical Assistance through CPDI.]

Main activities, to be coordinated by the State agencies, have been planned and an implementation schedule has been developed. [See Exhibit XIX: Work Plan & Implementation Schedule] Given the California Reading First Plan is approved by the USDE in June, the Work Plan calls for notifying LEAs of their eligibility and the application workshops as early as mid-July. The first round of LEA Applications is due by the first of September. The schedule for hiring the independent external evaluator is set for November. The schedule for the LEA's internal evaluation report and all of the agencies participating in Reading First has also been established.

The 2002-03 budget for California's Reading First Program proposes to give subgrants to LEAs \$124,999,937 (or 94% of the grant) and state support contracts of \$6,600,000 to LEAs/RICs providing technical assistance, \$500,000 for the independent external evaluator,

and \$873,000 to the Department of Education for grant administration and reporting (or 6% of the grant). [See Exhibit XX: Budget]

## **Section III**

### **Evaluation and Reporting Plan**

This section provides California's evaluation and reporting plan. Available resources are offered and attachments provided to verify the availability of evaluation measures and tools for use by LEAs and the state.

#### **A. Evaluation Plan**

The California Reading First Evaluation Plan requires various partners to collect and report information. This comprehensive program evaluation includes:

- LEAs' Internal Evaluations for State Purposes
- State Contracted Evaluator's Program Evaluation
- CPDI Professional Development Internal Evaluation with LEA and Statewide Level Summaries
- CPDI Technical Assistance Internal Evaluation with LEA and Statewide Level Summaries
- CTC Documentation of Pre-service & Reading Instruction Competence Assessment (RICA) efforts
- California Department of Education State Report on Student Achievement

The following describes specific evaluation activities of the various partners:

##### LEAs Internal Evaluation Requirements For State Purposes

The LEA will be required to have a LEA Internal Evaluation Plan to report findings on the LEA determined measures (e.g., the percentage of students at or above the benchmarks set for the six subtests of unit 5 or unit 6 of the Unit Skill Assessments: Grades 1 –3: oral reading fluency, reading comprehension, vocabulary, spelling, writing, and language usage or the percentage of students at or above the benchmarks set for an End-of-Year Assessment [Kindergarten: phonemic awareness and upper and lower case letter recognition, and Grades 1-3: oral reading fluency]). [See Exhibit XXI: Available LEA Internal Evaluation Tools; Available for Use by LEA for On-going, Classroom-based, Assessments and Available State Annual Assessment Tools]

##### State-Contracted Evaluator's Program Evaluation

The State Board of Education will approve an independent, external evaluator meeting study specifications recommend by the Reading and Literacy Partnership Evaluation Advisory Panel and the Department of Education, Policy and Evaluation Unit. The design will assume that some investigations will require stratified sampling of Reading First LEAs. Evaluator specifications will address such topics as:

- 1) Factors contributing to strong implementation efforts in Reading First schools
- 2) Factors contributing to weak implementation efforts in Reading First schools
- 3) Roles of the LEAs' key players (superintendent/board, curriculum and instruction administrators, coordinators, coaches, principals, and teachers) and their impact on successful or unsuccessful implementation
- 4) Support activities for coaches, principals, and teachers (e.g. grade level meetings, additional training, use of assessment data, use of technology)
- 5) Explanation of student achievement data offered by the district, principals, teachers, and then interpreted by evaluator.

Specifications will also require the independent external evaluator to collaborate with the Department of Education's Accountability Branch, Policy and Evaluation Unit, to analyze Reading First schools in terms of gains in the percentage of grade 2 and 3 students performing at grade level on the STAR-CAT (50 percentile or higher) and in the percentage of grade 2 and 3 students performing at basic or above on the STAR-CA Standards Test ("proficient" or higher). The independent external evaluator will make recommendations to the State Board of Education as to what should constitute, define, or determine the "number of students reading at grade level or above has significantly increased."

#### CPDI Professional Development Internal Evaluation by LEA and Statewide Summaries

CPDI requires each Reading Implementation Center to conduct an internal evaluation for the LEAs that receives professional development through the CPDI. [See Attachment L: Example of LAUSD CPDI Internal Evaluation Report]

Key questions to be answered in this evaluation are:

- How many and what percentage of K-3 teachers participated in the 40-hour institute by school?
- What are the CAT average achievement scores by school for grade levels 1, 2, and 3 (grade 1 is optional)?
- How many and what percentage of K-3 teacher participants, by school, completed the 80-hour follow-up practicum activities?
- What was the average number of hours reported in the 80-hour Passport for grade level meetings, training, classroom unit assessment analyses, and special events on the scientific research?
- How effective were the 40-hour institutes for K-3 teachers and K-12 special education teachers?
- How effective were the 40-hour institutes and follow-up workshops for the elementary school principals?
- How many teachers participated in UCLA Extension courses?

CPDI Technical Assistance Internal Evaluation by LEA and Statewide Summary

The Reading Development Center and the seven Reading Implementation Centers will document all services rendered to the Reading First LEA's and participating schools.

Technical Assistance Centers will be responsible for advising and training the LEAs of non-CPDI trained teachers, in the use and purposes of the *Kindergarten Monitoring and Assessment Log*, *Grade 1-3 Unit Skill Assessments*, and *End-of-Year Assessments* (all curriculum-embedded Assessments) should they be interested in using these measurement tools. This service will also include the establishment of a website in the District for data collection and data reporting at school sites and district levels. [See Attachments H-J: Available LEA Internal Evaluation and Monitoring Tools]

California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CCTC): Pre-service Program Update

The Commission on Teacher Credentialing will prepare an update on the reading components of the accreditation process and a status report on RICA (Reading Instruction Competence Assessment).

California Department of Education (CDE) – State Report

The State will set the timeline and reporting requirements for all of the above stated contributors to the State Report. The primary source of the State's portion of the required report will be derived from the state's assessment and accountability system:

A key component of this system is the Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) program. A portion of the STAR measures student progress towards mastering reading standards at grades 2-3. A second part of the STAR includes the use of a norm-referenced California Achievement Test (beginning in 2002-03) to compare students to national norms.

California also utilizes the California English Language Development Test (CELDT) to test students whose primary language is not English. This test, given for the first time in 2001, tracks student progress toward full English proficiency.

CDE will also be responsible for monitoring program compliance. Part of this work will include an interview survey administered to qualified LEA leaders involved in the Reading First Program. [see Attachment K: *Draft of Technical Assistance Survey/ Interview*] The purpose of the Survey will be to establish the level of compliance to the LEA *Assurance Statements* agreed upon at the time the LEA's RFP was approved. This *Assurance* document covers the essential elements of California's intent to meet the criteria of the Reading First Initiative.

[Note: See Exhibit XXII: Summary of Evaluation Responsibilities]

## B. Reporting Plan

As part of the Reading First Program Plan, the California Department of Education, Policy and Evaluation Unit, will have the responsibility for organizing and reporting program information to USDE. Internally, state-level, and LEA results and outcomes will be reviewed by the Reading and Literacy Partnership Team and forwarded to the SBE for its formal acceptance. Information on the effectiveness of the professional development and technical assistance program will be reported annually as specified in Section III. A., the Evaluation Strategies section.

Data that will be organized and reported for LEAs' schools in grades 2 and 3 includes:

- Norm-reference scores: percentage of students at or above the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile on CAT total reading (noting the decrease in percentages reading below grade level). Gains from 2001-02 to 2002-03 will be noted.
- Standards scores: percentage of students at all performance levels ("far below basic", "below basic", "basic", "proficient", and "advanced") on California's Standards Test for English/Language Arts (noting the decrease in percentages reading in "basic to far below basic"). Percentage shifts from 2001-02 to 2002-03 will be noted.
- English proficiency level scores: percentage of students at English proficiency on CELDT. Gains from 2001-02 to 2002-03 will be noted.
- Rank score: 1-10 state comparison and 1-10 comparative schools will be reported (this is based on the whole school and may not be considered an appropriate measure by the Reading and Literacy Partnership Team's Evaluation Advisory Committee). Shifts of ranks from 2001-02 to 2002-03 will be noted.

In addition, the USDE evaluation criteria calls for organizing and reporting the following information:

- The State already disaggregates the above scores by factors of English language and special education students. However, the State does not carry data on major racial/ethnic groups. LEAs will be required to collect this information.
- LEAs and schools will be reported according to categories of gains for each year in reading achievement based on both measures: CAT reading score and the California Standards Test percentages in performance levels.
- The State will compile a report on the other required LEA measures that will be prepared by the Technical Assistance (RIC) Centers. These may include *Unit Skill Assessments* for Grades 1-3 and *End-of-Year Assessments* for Grades K-3.

## C. National Evaluation

The Department of Education, Policy and Evaluation Unit, will work with USDE to identify and obtain volunteer LEAs and schools for use in the national evaluation of the Reading First Program. Furthermore, it will coordinate with the CPDI-RIC Technical Assistance Centers to engage their staff in supporting the selected LEAs and schools meet the evaluation needs of USDE.



## **Section IV**

### **Classroom Level Impact**

This concluding section addresses the real intent of California's need to be actively involved with the Secretary's Reading First Initiative—to achieve the goal of teaching every child how to read at or above grade level by the end of third grade because every child has the treasured right to be taught how to read.

#### **A. Key Reading First Classroom Characteristics**

California's Reading First Plan has a set of *Assurance Statements for LEA Reading First Subgrants*. This document serves as a proxy for the LEA's commitment to the quality and integrity of the Reading First Program. The statements address responsibilities of the LEA and each participating school site.

Critical to what happens in the Reading First classroom will be whether or not teachers hold to the fidelity of the instructional program that the local governing board adopted from the State Board's authorized list. This includes diligence in avoiding the use of other supplemental materials, technology programs, and/or assessments not aligned to the adopted reading/language arts instructional program.

Another key factor will be to what extent LEAs and school sites seek to fully implement the program and protect daily reading/language arts instructional time (a minimum of 2.5 hours for grades 1-3 and intervention grades 4-8 and 1 hour for kindergarten).

While a LEA will not be required to use the state's *Unit Skill Assessments*, they will need to use an on-going monitoring assessment in order to guide instruction and monitor student achievement.

The focus of the professional development programs will be to increase teachers' reflections on their practice and be driven by screening, diagnostic, and monitoring data to help teachers attend to the learning needs of their students.

The site administrator, as an instructional leader, will become a knowledgeable and supportive voice for teachers, especially if the school site hires reading coaches. Coaches help site administrators and teachers keep the focus on proper program implementation and students' needs.

[Note: Refer Exhibit VII: Assurance Statements of LEA and School Sites]

## B. Coherence

A recent article by Fred Newman, and others, acknowledging the power of coherence from a study on 222 Chicago elementary schools (“Instructional Program Coherence: What It Is and Why It Should Guide School Improvement Policy.” *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, Winter 2001, Vol. 23, No. 4.) The study suggests that the problem in most reform efforts is that there tends to be too many unrelated and unsustainable improvement programs. The report concludes that State, LEA, and school site policies must be built around “a set of interrelated programs for students and staff guided by a common framework for curriculum, instruction, assessment, and learning climate pursued over a sustained period.”

California's Reading First Plan is based on the need for coherence. There are very few reform efforts that have been able to sustain themselves. Most State and LEA efforts begin with intentions “to stay the course.” This three-year, with the possibility of up to six-years, effort of the Reading First Program is very promising. For as the Newman study suggests, “(If) LEA policy could assist instructional program coherence by requiring elementary schools to offer literacy instruction based on nationally recognized models and by offering a three-year sequence of professional development for school teams to help them gain mastery of an approach...” chances are success in student learning will occur. This concern for coherence is the goal for the Los Angeles Unified School District, the pilot LEA for California's Reading First Plan. The test is whether low performing schools can benefit from sustained, district-wide, professional development efforts, a common instructional program, use of peer reading coaches to support colleagues, and ongoing monitoring of student progress and instructional effectiveness. The challenge for policy leaders and the educational community is keeping the focus on the students in the classroom and finding models that work for the duration of this national Reading First Initiative.

California currently offers professional development for over 2,000 pre-K teachers in the same format as K-3 teachers. The 40 hours of training include a focus on skills such as the awareness of print, the relationship of print to speech, text structure, phonological awareness, and letter naming and writing. As Early Reading First grants are awarded in California, efforts will be made to connect them to corresponding Reading First LEAs.

Coherence in policy and practice will be greatly enhanced in California with its involvement in the Reading First Program. All members of the LEA's Reading First Leadership Team, representing key policy decision-makers, reading practitioners, and community-based leaders, will serve as the keepers of the coherence factors. As evidenced at recent CPDI events, teachers are wearing their button that connotes California's goal for coherence: Teach Reading Relentlessly—every student, every day, every grade, every year!